

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06
EUR-12 EB-08 AID-05 CU-04 /088 W
-----038608 170154Z /23

R 160900Z FEB 78
FM AMEMBASSY BISSAU
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0917
INFO USS VALDEZ
COMSECONDFLT
CINCLANTFLT NORFOLK VA
USCOMSOLANT
COMNAVSURFLANT NORFOLK VA
COMDESRON SIX
AMEMBASSY DAKAR POUCH

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DAKAR FOR DATT

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: OCLR, PU
SUBJECT: USS VALDEZ VISIT TO BISSAU

1. USS VALDEZ VISIT TO BISSAU, REPUBLIC OF GUINEA-BISSAU
FEBRUARY 8-11, 1978, WAS COMPLETE SUCCESS, FULFILLING EMBASSY'S
HOPES THAT EVENT WOULD BE PUBLIC STATEMENT BY GOGB THAT US-GB
RELATIONS ARE NORMAL, CORDIAL, AND IMPROVING. MEDIUM WAS MORE
THAN MERE MESSAGE, HOWEVER, AND SHOULD RESULT IN BETTER EMBASSY
RELATIONS WITH GOGB OFFICIALS (INCLUDING MILITARY) AND INCREASED
AWARENESS AMONG PUBLIC OF UNITED STATES AS FRIENDLY MAJOR POWER
RATHER THAN BROODING IMPERIALIST NEMESIS. FULL REPORT FOLLOWS BY
AIRGRAM.

2. EMBASSY/MFA ARRANGED PROGRAM BEGAN TO DISINTEGRATE
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ALMOST IMMEDIATELY UPON ARRIVAL OF VALDEZ ANT MOUTH OF
RIVER CHANNEL. FOR NEXT THREE DAYS, PROGRAM WAS IN-
CREASINGLY AD HOC. ACTIVITIES INCLUDED RECEPTION AT
RESIDENCE, BUFFET DINNER ABOARD VALDEZ, AND FORMAL
DINNER FOR OFFICERS OF SHIP HOSTED BY SENIOR GUINEA-BISSAU
MILITARY OFFICER. SPORTS ACTIVITIES WERE GREAT SUCCESS:
SOCCER, TENNIS, AND BASKETBALL, WITH LARGE CROWD (BY

LOCAL STANDARDS) EVEN GATHERING TO WATCH VALDEZ BASKET-BALL TEAM PRACTICE.

3. ALTHOUGH WE AND VALDEZ HAD PLANNED PUBLIC AND VIP VISITS AS CENTERPIECE OF PROGRAM, LOGISTICAL PROBLEMS AND MFA HESITATION (SEE BELOW) CUT DOWN NUMBER OF VISITORS. HOWEVER, A SUBSTANTIAL AMOUNT OF VISITING DID OCCUR AND RELAXED AND HOSPITABLE ATTITUDE OF VALDEZ CREW COMBINED WITH IMPRESSIVENESS OF SHIP ITSELF CREATED MUCH FAVORABLE TALK IN BISSAU.

4. GOGB ATTITUDE WAS SOMEWHAT GUARDED AND HESITANT BUT WE HAVE IMPRESSION THIS WAS DUE LARGELY TO FEAR THEY COULD NOT PROPERLY MANAGE TOO MANY EVENTS. MANY PROGRAM SUGGESTIONS WE MADE WERE REFUSED OR NEVER ACTED UPON. NUMEROUS OFFICIALS, FROM MFA CONTROL OFFICER TO PRESIDENT OF REPUBLIC, APOLOGIZED FOR HITCHES, PROBLEMS, AND DELAYS AND ASKED FOR FORBEARANCE ON OUR PART, STATING THAT THEY WERE NEW COUNTRY WITH LITTLE EXPERIENCE, AND "WOULD DO BETTER NEXT TIME". OFFICIAL ATTITUDES APPEARED TO WARM UP AS DAYS PASSED, AND WE HAVE IMPRESSION THAT GOGB ELEVATED ITS PARTICIPATION AT END, I.E. FINAL NIGHT COCKTAIL-RECEPTION CHANGED WITHOUT INFORMING US TO FORMAL DINNER WITH ENTERTAINMENT, AND PRESIDENT CABRAL REQUESTED THAT CAPTAIN OF VALDEZ CALL ON HIM. CERTAINLY, OUR "FRIENDS" IN THE GOVERNMENT WERE DELIGHTED, AND NEW CONTACTS APPEARED BEMUSED TO FIND THAT THE US DEVIL WAS IN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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FACT A LIKEABLE AND FRIENDLY BEASTY, MORE AN ENGLISH SHEEP DOG THAN A DOBERMAN PINSCHER.

5. PUBLIC REACTION WAS VERY OPEN AND FRIENDLY, AND VALDEZ SAILORS REPORTED MANY LOW-KEY, RELAXED CONTACTS WITH THE ORDINARY MAN-IN-THE-STREET. (FYI DAKAR: VALDEZ' SAILORS UNANIMOUSLY JUDGED BISSAU A BETTER LIBERTY TOWN THAN DAKAR. PEOPLE WERE FRIENDLY, SPORTS EVENTS WERE MORE FUN, AND ABSENCE OF BEGGARS, THIEVES, AND GENERAL HARASSMENT FAVORABLY REMARKED UPON.)

6. CONTRAST WITH BEHAVIOR OF SOVIET WARSHIP WHICH VISITED BISSAU LAST YEAR IS SUBJECT OF MUCH TALK IN TOWN (SOVIET SHIP ARRIVED AND LEFT, AND IN BETWEEN SAT IN HARBOR WITH NO CONTACT BETWEEN CREW AND CITY.)

7. EVENT ITSELF IS MAJOR DEVELOPMENT IN US-GB RELATIONS AS IT CONSTITUTED PUBLIC STATEMENT BY GOGB THAT USG NO LONGER ENEMY. GOGB ACCEPTANCE OF USG ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE HAS ALREADY LED TO CORDIAL WORKING RELATIONS WITH MANY IN GOVERNMENT, AND VALDEZ VISIT OFFERED OPPORTUNITY FOR CONTACT WITH OTHER ELEMENTS, NOTABLY

MILITARY.

8. IN SUM, VALDEZ VISIT WAS TEXTBOOK EXAMPLE OF SHOWING THE FLAG IN PURSUIT OF BETTER BILATERAL RELATIONS. THE OPPORTUNITY AND TIMING WERE RIGHT AND THE PROFESSIONAL AND PERSONAL BEHAVIOR OF CREW BROUGHT IT OFF BEAUTIFULLY. OUR COMPLIMENTS TO CAPTAIN JACOBSEN AND THE OFFICERS AND MEN OF THE USS VALDEZ.

MARKS

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 16 feb 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978BISSAU00195
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780072-0973
Format: TEL
From: BISSAU
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780249/aaaabpgd.tel
Line Count: 124
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: a638dbd5-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 25 apr 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3578052
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: USS VALDEZ VISIT TO BISSAU
TAGS: OCLR, PU
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/a638dbd5-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014